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Republicans join together to fight for Michigan jobs

Lansing – Senate Majority Leader Ken Sikkema (R-Wyoming) Monday announced an unprecedented proposal to provide much-needed job opportunities for Michigan residents.

Sen. Valde Garcia (R-Howell) said the proposal would help create manufacturing jobs, spur new small-business investment for more job opportunities and provide incentives to expand the state's slow-moving economy by getting Michigan residents back to work.

"We cannot afford to wait for the economic recovery to reach Michigan," Garcia said. "We have to be proactive and help employers retain and create jobs."

The plan would:

- Create Tool & Die Recovery Zones to provide tax relief similar to Renaissance Zones.
- Provide tax incentives for small start-up businesses by exempting them from most taxes for the first two years of operation then phasing in tax liabilities for the following four years.
- Reauthorize, strengthen and provide more accountability for the Michigan Economic Growth Authority, which expires on Dec. 31. MEGA is the state's main tax-incentive granting authority used to spur economic development.
- Create a venture capital investment incentive by offering income and Single Business Tax breaks to those who might lose money investing in Michigan start-up businesses.
- Establish a Clean Michigan Initiative revolving loan program to clean up abandoned brownfield sites. This program would transfer the remaining CMI funding into a grant and loan program.

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- Improve Michigan's infrastructure by expediting the 2002 voter-approved Sewer Bond Initiative to allow communities to start construction projects sooner.
- Call on the Michigan Economic Development Corporation to provide a small-business "czar" and a manufacturing "czar" with the experience and vision to focus on small-business start-ups, as well as retaining and creating manufacturing jobs.
- Implement a Forestry Initiative that would adopt forest management changes to protect the environment and create new job opportunities by strengthening Michigan's timber industry.

"We must act now to stem the stream of jobs leaving our state," Garcia said. "Families are depending on us to do something."

Legislation inspired by the plan is already scheduled for introduction this week.

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